

**REMARKS**

Applicants acknowledge that this application is currently under final rejection. Accordingly, a Request for Continued Examination has been submitted concurrently herewith. Further examination of this application based on the foregoing amendment is respectfully requested.

Applicants acknowledge the allowance of Claims 6-9 and 11-21 as set forth in item 5 of the Office Action, and the indication of the allowability of the subject matter of Claim 10, subject to correction of certain formal issues discussed below, as set forth in item 6. In response to item 2 of the Office Action, Applicants have amended Claim 10 to depend from Claim 6, as suggested by the Examiner. Accordingly, Claim 10 is now believed to be allowable.

Claims 2-5 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Takeda et al (Published U.S. Patent Application No. 2004/0061348 A1) in view of Berdan et al (U.S. Patent No. 5,353,571). However, for the reasons set forth hereinafter, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 2 through 5 as amended distinguish over the cited references, whether considered separately or in combination.

The Takeda et al reference discloses a side molding for a vehicle which includes "a main body, [and] clips for mounting the main body to the body or door

of the motor vehicle....” (Abstract, lines 6-7.) Each clip 24 (Figure 3) “includes a leg part for fitting in the vehicle body or vehicle door”, as well as a head 42 for attaching to the main body. (See paragraph [0055].) In mounting the side molding to a body or door of the motor vehicle, the clips 24 are attached to the main body 22, and are distributed at distances of 100 to 250 millimeters. The side molding 28, to which the clips 24 have thus been attached is mounted on the body or door of the motor vehicle “by inserting the leg part 40 of each clip 24” in each of a plurality of clip holes which have previously been provided in the side panel of the vehicle body or door. (See paragraphs [0069] and [0070].)

As is apparent from the foregoing, the Takeda et al reference discloses a body molding which is attached to the vehicle by a plurality of individual clips, each of which has a dsngle attachment point (leg part 40). The clips are attached to the side molding at intervals of 100 to 250 millimeters along its length. By contrast, Claim 2 of the present application recites that each part of the support element includes a plurality of discrete attachment points distributed along its longitudinal direction, for connection of the visible element, and furthermore that in an installed state of the vehicle covering component, the parts of the support element abut one another lengthwise, forming a substantially continuous support structure with the attachment points distributed along the longitudinal direction thereof. These features are neither taught nor suggested by Takeda et al.

Moreover, the Berdan et al reference has been cited in regard to Claims 2 through 5 only as teaching the use of double sided tape to attach a support element to a vehicle. Like Takeda et al, Berdan et al fails to teach or suggest a vehicle covering component such as recited in Claim 2, which includes an elongate support element which comprises at least two discrete parts, each of which includes a plurality of attachment points distributed along its length in the manner described previously. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 2 through 5 distinguish over the cited Takeda et al and Berdan et al references.

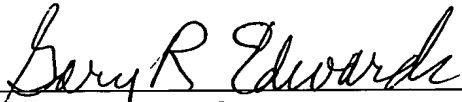
In light of the foregoing remarks, this application should be in condition for allowance, and early passage of this case to issue is respectfully requested. If there are any questions regarding this amendment or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

If necessary to effect a timely response, this paper should be considered as a petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response, and

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please charge any deficiency in fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit  
Account No. 05-1323 (Docket #095309.52833US).

Respectfully submitted,

  
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